



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

Dove, Shetterly, Brown, and Baldacci Receive Literary Awards

2017 recipients honored at the Library of Virginia

CONTACT: Amy Bridge, Library of Virginia Foundation
804.692.3590, amy.bridge@lva.virginia.gov

(Richmond, Virginia) – The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the winners of the **20th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards**, sponsored by Dominion Energy. The October 14 awards celebration was hosted by best-selling author and award-winning filmmaker Adriana Trigiani. Awards categories were poetry, nonfiction, fiction, People’s Choice (nonfiction and fiction), art in literature, young adult literature, and literary lifetime achievement. Winners of the Library of Virginia’s Annual Literary Awards receive a monetary prize and a handsome engraved crystal book.

Rita Dove is the recipient of the 2017 Literary Award for Poetry for her book *Collected Poems: 1974–2004*, which the judges described as, “three decades of powerful lyric poetry from a virtuoso of the English language.” A past Library of Virginia Lifetime Achievement Award honoree, Dove is Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia, where she has been teaching since 1989. She served as U.S. Poet Laureate (1993–1995) and Poet Laureate of Virginia (2004–2006) and has received numerous literary and academic honors, among them the 1987 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, the 1996 Heinz Award in the Arts and Humanities, a National Humanities Medal from President Clinton, and a National Medal of Arts from President Obama. Recipient of the 2014 Carole Weinstein Poetry Prize, she has 25 honorary doctorates to her credit, most recently from Yale University. *Collected Poems* was a 2016 National Book Awards finalist and a 2016 NAACP Image Award winner.

The other finalists for the poetry prize were Cathryn Hankla for *Great Bear* and Sally Keith for *River House*. Honorable mentions were awarded to Brynne Rebele-Henry for *Fleshgraphs* and Lisa Spaar (editor) for *Monticello in Mind: Fifty Contemporary Poems on Jefferson*.

The winner of the 2017 Literary Award for Nonfiction is Margot Lee Shetterly for her book *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*, which “celebrates these unsung heroes and their experiences with issues of race, gender, and scientific innovation,” according to the judges. Shetterly is a writer, researcher, and entrepreneur. A 2014 Alfred P.

800 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

www.lva.virginia.gov

804.692.3500 *phone*
804.692.3976 *ty*

Sloan Foundation Fellow and a Virginia Foundation for the Humanities grantee, Shetterly is the founder of the Human Computer Project, an endeavor that is recovering the names and accomplishments of all of the women who worked as computers, mathematicians, scientists, and engineers for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and NASA from the 1930s through the 1980s. She is a graduate of the University of Virginia and a native of Hampton, where she knew many of the women behind the history in her *New York Times* best-selling book *Hidden Figures*, which has been adapted into a Young Reader's Edition, a picture book, and an Oscar-nominated film. She lived for many years in New York and Mexico before moving to Charlottesville, where she lives with her husband, the writer Aran Shetterly.

The other finalists for the nonfiction prize were Annette Gordon-Reed and Peter S. Onuf for *Most Blessed of the Patriarchs": Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of the Imagination* and Belle Boggs for *The Art of Waiting: On Fertility, Medicine, and Motherhood*.

John Gregory Brown won the 2017 Emyl Jenkins Sexton Literary Award for Fiction for his book *A Thousand Miles from Nowhere*, the story of one man's fight for survival in the aftermath a natural disaster. The judges cited Brown's comedic touch that "elevates a quirky Southern odyssey into a masterful exploration of grace, loss, and redemption." Brown is the author of the novels *Decorations in a Ruined Cemetery*; *The Wrecked, Blessed Body of Shelton Lafleur*; and *Audubon's Watch*. His honors include a Lyndhurst Prize, the Lillian Smith Book Award, the John Steinbeck Award, a Howard Foundation Fellowship, and the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Book of the Year Award. For two decades he has taught at Sweet Briar College, where he directs the creative writing program and serves as the Julia Jackson Nichols Professor of English. He is a 2017 recipient of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's Outstanding Faculty Award. He and his wife, the novelist Carrie Brown, have three children.

The other finalists for the fiction award were Kelly Kerney for *Hard Red Spring* and Lee Clay Johnson for *Nitro Mountain*.

The winners of the People's Choice Awards are *The Stargazer's Sister* by **Carrie Brown** in the fiction category (the awards for Carrie Brown and John Gregory Brown mark our first pair of husband-and-wife winners in one year) and *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race* by **Margot Lee Shetterly** in the nonfiction category. Winners are chosen by readers who vote online. Winners of the People's Choice Awards receive a monetary prize and an engraved crystal book.

David Baldacci is the recipient of the 2017 Library of Virginia Literary Lifetime Achievement Award. Baldacci has been writing since childhood, when his mother gave him a lined notebook in which to write down his stories. (Much later, when he thanked her for being the spark that ignited his writing career, she revealed that she'd given him the notebook to keep him quiet, because "every mom needs a break now and then.") Baldacci published his first novel, *Absolute Power*, in 1996. A feature film followed, with Clint Eastwood as its director and star. In total, he has published 34 novels for adults; all have been national and international best sellers, and several have been adapted for film and television. His novels have been translated into more than 45 languages and sold in more than 80 countries; over 110 million copies are in print worldwide. Baldacci has also published six novels for younger readers. A lifelong Virginian, he received his bachelor's degree from Virginia Commonwealth University and his law degree from the University of Virginia School of Law, after which he

practiced law in Washington, D.C. In addition to being a prolific writer, he is a devoted philanthropist, and his greatest efforts are dedicated to his family's Wish You Well Foundation®. Established with his wife, Michelle Baldacci, the foundation supports family and adult literacy in the United States by fostering and promoting the development and expansion of literacy and educational programs. In 2008 the foundation partnered with Feeding America to launch Feeding Body & Mind, a program to address the connection between literacy, poverty, and hunger. More than 1 million new and gently used books have been collected and distributed through food banks to families in need through the program. Baldacci and his family live in Virginia.

The Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award went to Dawn Tripp for her book *Georgia: A Novel of Georgia O'Keeffe*, the story of O'Keeffe and her love affair with photographer Alfred Stieglitz. Presented by the Library and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Art in Literature Award recognizes an outstanding book published in the previous year that is written primarily in response to a work (or works) of art while also showing the highest literary quality as a creative or scholarly work. This unique award, established in 2013, is named in honor of Mary Lynn Kotz, author of the award-winning biography *Rauschenberg: A Life*.

New to the Literary Awards this year is the Young Adult Virginia Authors Award, presented in collaboration with the Richmond Public Library Foundation. The award is given each year to honor an exemplary book written for Young Adults by an author living in Virginia. **The 2017 recipient of the Young Adult Virginia Authors Award is Lisa Maxwell** for her book *Unhooked*, a lush, atmospheric fantasy novel filled with twists and turns about a girl who is kidnapped and brought to an island inhabited by fairies, a roguish ship captain, and bloodthirsty beasts. Maxwell is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Last Magician*. Her other critically acclaimed books include *Sweet Unrest* and *Gathering Deep*. She has a PhD in English, and when she's not writing books, she's a college English professor. Maxwell grew up in Akron, Ohio, and currently makes her home near Washington, D.C.

Next year's Literary Awards Celebration will be held on October 13, 2018.

###